SPEECH

OF THE

RIGHT HONOURABLE

CHARLES JAMES FOX,

ON

Mr. WHITBREAD's MOTIONS

ON THE

RUSSIAN ARMAMENT,

THURSDAY, MARCH 1, 1792.

LONDON:

Printed for J. DEBRETT, opposite Burlington House, Piccadilly.

M.DCC.XCII.

BRITISH MUSEUM

SPEECH, &c.

HOUSE of COMMONS,

Thurſday, March 1, 1792.

MR. WHITBREAD, Member for the Town of Bedford, moved the following Reſolutions:

"That no arrangement, reſpecting Oczakow and its diſtrict, appears to have "been capable of affecting the political or "commercial intereſts of this country, ſo as "to juſtify any hoſtile interference on the "part of Great Britain between Ruſſia and "the Porte;" which was negatived.

"That the interference of Great Britain "for the purpoſe of preventing the ceſſion of "the ſaid fortreſs, and its diſtrict, to the "Empreſs of Ruſſia, has been wholly unſuc- "ceſsful."

The previous queſtion was put and carried.

"That His Majeſty's Miniſters in endea- "vouring, by means of an armed force, to "compel the Empreſs of Ruſſia to abandon "her claim to Oczakow and its diſtrict, and "in continuing an armament, after the object "for which it was propoſed had been relin- "quiſhed, have been guilty of groſs miſcon- "duct, tending to incur unneceſſary ex- "pences, and to diminiſh the influence of "the Britiſh nation in Europe."

The Houſe divided,

Ayes, 116; Noes, 244.

The Houſe becoming extremely clamorous, Mr. FOX roſe after Mr. Powys.

[*Thoſe who ſhall attempt to report a ſpeech of* Mr. Fox, *will do well to convince themſelves, that with whatever aid their memories may be furniſhed by their reflections, any promiſe of reporting it correctly muſt give birth to compariſons very fatal to their purpoſe. This is a difficulty that increaſes with the excellence to be imitated. It becomes us, therefore, rather to ſay what our pretenſions are not, than what they are; and thus we ſhall hope to juſtify an appeal to the indulgence of the Public, large and liberal, indeed, as muſt be that indulgence, conſidering that it muſt increaſe in proportion to their diſappointment, and that we want it moſt when they can ſpare it leaſt. The ſpeech delivered this night by Mr. Fox, ranks with the moſt ſucceſsful efforts of his genius; and its impreſſion upon the public mind will be deep and laſting.*]

After the challenge which was thrown out to me, in the ſpeech of a right honourable gentleman, (Mr. Dundas) laſt night, (ſaid Mr. Fox) I did conſider it my duty to trouble you ſomewhat at length on this important queſtion. But before I enter into the conſideration of it, I will explain why I did not obey a call made in the beginning of the day, and repeated ſeveral times, in a manner not very conſiſtent either with the freedom of debate, or with the order which the right honourable gentleman himſelf has preſcribed for the diſcuſſion of this day. Why any Members ſhould think themſelves entitled to call on an individual in that way, I know not, but why I did not yield to the call is obvious. It was ſaid by an honourable gentleman laſt night to be the wiſh of the right honourable gentleman to hear all that could be ſaid on the ſubject, before he ſhould riſe to enter into his defence. If ſo, it certainly would not become me to prevent him from hearing any other gentleman who might be inclined to ſpeak on the occaſion; and as he particularly alluded to me, I thought

it

it reſpectful to give way to gentlemen, that I might not interrupt the courſe which he has choſen for himſelf, as it ſeems he reſerves himſelf till I have ſpoken. This call on me is of a ſingular nature. A Miniſter is accuſed of having raſhly engaged the country in a meaſure, by which we have ſuffered diſaſter and diſgrace, and when a motion of cenſure is made, he chuſes to reſerve himſelf, and ſpeak after every one, that no means may be given to reply to his defence—to expoſe its fallacy if fallacious—or to detect its miſrepreſentations, if he ſhall chuſe to miſrepreſent what may be ſaid. If the right honourable gentleman is truly deſirous of meeting the charges againſt him, and he has confidence in his ability to vindicate his conduct, why not purſue the courſe which would be manly and open? Why not go into a Committee, as was offered him by the honourable gentleman who made the motion, (Mr. Whitbread) in which the forms of this Houſe would have permitted Members on each ſide to anſwer whatever was advanced by the other, and the ſubject would have received the moſt

ample

ample diſcuſſion? Inſtead of this honourable courſe, he is determined to take all advantages. He ſcreens himſelf by a ſtratagem which no defendant in any proceſs in this country could enjoy; ſince no man put upon his defence in any Court of Juſtice could ſo contrive as not only to prevent all reply to his defence, but all refutation of what he may aſſert—all explanation of what he may miſrepreſent. Such are the advantages which the right honourable gentleman is determined to ſeize in this moment of his trial; and to confeſs the truth, never did man ſtand ſo much in need of every advantage! never was there an occaſion in which a Miniſter was exhibited to this Houſe in circumſtances ſo ungracious, as thoſe under which he ſtands before it in the preſent moment! For what is our preciſe ſituation? Laſt ſeſſion of Parliament we had no fewer than four debates upon the queſtion of the armament, in which the right honourable gentleman involved this country, without condeſcending to explain the object which he had in view. The minority

nority of this Houſe ſtood forth againſt the monſtrous meaſure of involving the country, without unfolding the reaſon. The Miniſter proudly and obſtinately refuſed, and called on the majority to ſupport him. We gave our opinion at large on the ſubject, and with effect, as it turned out, on the public mind. On that of the right honourable gentleman, however, we are not ſucceſsful; for what was his conduct? He replied to us, "I hear what "you ſay—I could anſwer all your charges, "but I know my duty to my King too well "to ſubmit at this moment to expoſe the ſe- "crets of the ſtate, and to lay the reaſons "before you of the meaſure on which I de- "mand your confidence. I chuſe rather to "lie for a time under all the imputations "which you may heap againſt me, truſting "to the explanations which will come at laſt." Such was explicitly his language. However I might differ from the right honourable gentleman in opinion, I felt for his ſituation. There was in this excuſe ſome ſhadow of a reaſon on which it might be poſſible to defend

him, when the whole of his conduct came to be inquired into. I thought it hard to goad him, when, perhaps, he conſidered it as unſafe to expoſe what he was doing. But when the concluſion of the negociation had looſed him from his fetters, when he had caſt off the trammels that bound him, I thought, that like the horſe deſcribed by Homer, (if I remembered I would quote the lines) exulting in the freſh paſtures after he had freed himſelf from the bridle, the right honourable gentleman would have been eager to meet us with every ſort of explanation and ſatisfaction. I thought that, reſtrained by no delicacy, and panting only for the moment that was to reſtore him to the means of developing, of expatiating upon, every part of his conduct that was myſterious, of clearing up that which had been reprobated, of repelling on the heads of his adverſaries thoſe very accuſations with which they had loaded him—the right honourable gentleman would have had but one wiſh, that of coming forward in a bold and manly manner, and endeavouring

to make his cauſe good againſt us, in the face of the world. Has he done ſo? has he even given us the means of inquiring fully and fairly into his conduct? No ſuch thing. He lays before us a ſet of papers, ſufficient, indeed, as I ſhall contend, to found a ſtrong criminal charge for miſconduct againſt him, but evidently mutilated, garbled, and imperfect, with a view of precluding that full inquiry which his conduct demands, and which we had every reaſon to expect he would not have ſhrunk from on this day. We call for more; they are denied us. Why? "Be-"cauſe," ſay the gentlemen on the other ſide, "unleſs the papers now before you "ſhew there is ground for accuſation, "and unleſs you agree to accuſe, it is not "ſafe or proper to grant you more." But is this a *defence* for the right honourable gentleman? Do theſe papers exculpate him? Directly the reverſe. *Prima facie* they condemn him. They afford us, in the firſt inſtance, the proof of diſappointment. They ſhew us that we have not obtained what we armed to

obtain, and they gave us no juſtification of the right honourable gentleman for that diſappointment. I have heard much ingenuity diſplayed, to maintain that there was no guilt. But what is the fallacy of this argument? When we called for papers during the Spaniſh negociation, we were anſwered, "the negociation was pending, and it was "unſafe to grant them." Very well. But when it was over, and the ſame reaſons for withholding them could not be ſaid to exiſt, we were told, "Look to the reſult—the na-"tion is ſatisfied with what we have got, and "you muſt lay a ground of criminality before "we can admit your principle of calling for "papers." Thus we were precluded from all inquiry into that buſineſs; but now the right honourable gentleman, conſcious that the country feels ſomewhat differently, admits the ground of criminality to have been laid by producing thoſe documents on your table, imperfect as they are. It is from his own confeſſion, therefore, that I am to pronounce him guilty, until he proves himſelf not to be

ſo; and it is enough for me to contend, that the papers now before us afford him *prima facie*, no juſtification; but, on the contrary, afford ſtrong proof of his guilt, inaſmuch as they evince a complete failure in the object he armed to obtain. Sir, the right honourable gentleman is ſenſible how much theſe circumſtances render it neceſſary for him to take every poſſible advantage his ſituation can give him; inſtead, therefore, of ſhewing himſelf anxious to come forward, or thinking it his duty to explain why it was inconvenient or impolitic for him to ſtate laſt year the true grounds on which he had called upon us to arm, what was the object of that armament, and why he had abandoned it, he lays a few papers on the table, and contents himſelf with an appeal unheard of before.—"If you have any thing "to ſay againſt me, ſpeak out, ſpeak all— "I will not ſay a word till you have done— "let me hear you one after another—I will "have all the advantage of the game—none "of you ſhall come behind me—for as ſoon "as you have all thrown forth what you

" have to ſay, I will make a ſpeech, which " you ſhall not have an opportunity to con- " tradict, and I will throw myſelf on my " majority, that makes you dumb for " ever."—Such is the ſituation in which we ſtand, and ſuch is the courſe which the right honourable gentleman thinks it honourable to purſue!

I cheerfully yield to him the ground he chuſes to occupy, and ſubmit to the call addreſſed perſonally to myſelf (although, perhaps, not in a manner very decorous) of ſtating to the Houſe what I have to offer, before the right honourable gentleman will open his lips.

Having made theſe preliminary obſervations on the manner in which this buſineſs has been conducted, I will proceed frankly to ſtate the reaſons upon which I found the vote of cenſure, in which I ſhall this night agree. Much argument has been uſed on topics, not unfit, indeed, to be mixed with

this

this queſtion, but not neceſſary; topics, which undoubtedly may be incidently taken up, but which are not eſſential to the diſcuſſion. In this claſs I rank what has been ſaid upon the balance of Europe. Whether the inſulated ſtate of policy which diſdained all continental connection whatever, as adopted at the beginning of the preſent reſent reign—whether the ſyſtem of extenſive foreign connection, ſo eagerly inſiſted on by a young gentleman who ſpoke yeſterday for the firſt time—or whether, as I am inclined to ſuſpect, is the true and wiſe courſe—the medium between theſe two, be our intereſt, are certainly very proper topics to be diſcuſſed, but as certainly not eſſential topics to this queſtion. Of the three, I certainly think the middle line the true political courſe of this country; I think that, in our ſituation, every continental connection is to be determined by its own merits. I am one of thoſe who think that a total inattention to foreign connections might be, as it has proved, very injurious to this country. But if I am driven to chuſe be-

tween

tween the two extremes, between that of ſtanding inſulated and aloof from all foreign connection, and truſting for defence to our own reſources, and that ſyſtem, as laid down in the ſpeech of an honourable gentleman, who diſtinguiſhed himſelf ſo much laſt night, to the extent to which he preſſed it, I do not heſitate to declare that my opinion is for the firſt of thoſe ſituations. I ſhould prefer even total diſunion to that ſort of connection, to preſerve which we ſhould be obliged to riſk the blood and the reſources of the country in every quarrel and every change that ambition or accident might bring about in any part of the continent of Europe. But in the queſtion before us, I deny that I am driven to either of theſe extremes. The honourable gentleman, who ſpoke with all the open ingenuouſneſs, as well as the animation of youth, ſeemed himſelf to dread the extent to which his own doctrines would lead him: he failed, therefore, to ſuſtain the policy of the ſyſtem he deſcribed, in that part where it can alone apply, namely, to the degree in which it is

neceſſary

neceſſary for us to ſupport a balance of power. Holland, for inſtance, he ſtates to be our natural ally. Granted. "To preſerve Holland, "and that ſhe may not fall into the arms of "France, we muſt make an alliance with "Pruſſia." Good. But Pruſſia may be attacked by Auſtria. Then we muſt make an alliance with the Ottoman Porte, that they may fall on Auſtria. Well, but the Porte may be attacked by Ruſſia—then we muſt make an alliance with Sweden, that he may fall on Ruſſia. By the way, I muſt here remind him, that he totally forgot even to mention Poland, as if that country, now become in ſome degree able to act for itſelf, from the change in its conſtitution, was of no moment, or incapable of influencing in any manner upon this ſyſtem of treaties and attacks. His natural ingenuity pointed out to him, that in caſting up the account of all this, it would not produce a favourable balance for England, and he evaded the conſequence of his own principle, by ſaying, that perhaps Ruſſia would not attack the Porte: for when we

ſpeculate

ſpeculate on extreme caſes, (ſays the honourable gentleman) we have a right to make allowances: it is fair to expect that when we are in alliance with the Porte, Ruſſia will feel too ſenſibly the importance of the commercial advantages ſhe enjoys by her intercourſe with this country, to riſk the loſs of them by an attack on the Porte.——Are we then to ſuppoſe, that in that ſcene of univerſal conteſt and warfare, this ambitious Power, that is perpetually and ſyſtematically, as it has been reproached her, aiming at the deſtruction of the Porte, and while the reſt of Europe has been at peace, has been in a ſtate of reſtleſs and unceaſing hoſtility with her, will then be the only power at peace, and let ſlip ſo favourable an opportunity of deſtroying her old enemy, ſimply becauſe ſhe is afraid of loſing her trade with you in the Baltic? If the honourable gentleman means to ſtate this as a rational conjecture, I would aſk him to look to the fact. Did her ſenſe of theſe advantages reſtrain her in the late war, or compel her to deſiſt from the demands ſhe

made

made before we began to arm? Certainly not. We find from the documents before us, that ſhe adhered to one uniform, ſteady courſe, from which neither the apprehenſion of commercial loſs, nor the terrors of our arms, influenced her one moment to recede. What then are we to conclude from this intricate ſyſtem of balances and counterbalances, and thoſe dangerous theories with which the honourable gentleman ſeemed to amuſe himſelf? Why, that theſe are ſpeculations too remote from our policy; that in ſome parts, even according to the honourable gentleman's argument, they may be defective, after all, and conſequently, that if the ſyſtem he builds upon it fails in one of its poſſibilities, it fails in the whole of them. Such muſt ever be the fate of ſyſtems ſo nicely conſtructed.—But it is not true, that the ſyſtem neceſſary to enable this country to derive the true benefit from the Dutch alliance, ought to be founded upon thoſe involved and myſterious politics which make it incumbent upon us, nay, which prove its

perfection, by compelling us to ſtand forward the principals in every quarrel, the Quixotes of every enterpriſe, the agitators in every plot, intrigue, and diſturbance, which are every day ariſing in Europe, to embroil one ſtate of it with another. I confeſs that my opinions fall infinitely ſhort of theſe perilous extremes; that poſſibly my genius is too ſcanty, and my underſtanding too limited and feeble, for the contemplation of their conſequences, and that I can ſpeculate no farther than on connections immediately neceſſary to preſerve us, ſafe and proſperous, from the power of our open enemies, and the encroachment of our competitors: that this I hold to be the only teſt by which the merits of an alliance can be tried, which I ſhould eſteem either valuable or uſeleſs, in proportion to its ſtrict adherence to this principle. I did think, for inſtance, that when the intrigues of France threatened to deprive us of our ancient ally, Holland, it was wiſe to interfere, and afterward to form an alliance by which that evil might be prevented.—

vented.—But every ſtep beyond the alliance we then formed, every link in the chain of confederacies ſo largely expatiated upon by the gentlemen on the other ſide, brings us more and more remote from its true principle; the broad and clear lines of your policy become narrower and leſs diſtinct, until they are carried at laſt to an extremity of Europe, where every trace of them is loſt.

Other topics have been introduced into the diſcuſſion. The beginning of the war between Ruſſia and the Porte has been referred to. What poſſible connection that has with our armament I know not; but of that I ſhall have occaſion to ſpeak by and by.

I come, however, Sir, to a queſtion more immediately before us, and that is, the value and importance annexed in the minds of his Majeſty's Miniſters, to the fortreſs of Oczaknow; and here I muſt beg leave to ſay, that they have not once attempted to anſwer the arguments ſo judiciouſly and ably en-

forced by my honourable friend who made this motion. It was explicitly ſtated by the gentlemen on the other ſide, as the only argument for our interference at all, that the balance of Europe was threatened with great danger, if Oczakow was ſuffered to remain in the hands of Ruſſia. Of no leſs importance did Miniſters laſt year ſtate this fortreſs of Oczakow, than as if it were indeed the *taliſman* * on which depended the fate of the whole Ottoman Empire.

But if this, from their own admiſſion, was true laſt year, what has happened to alter its value? If it then excited the alarms of his Majeſty's Miniſters for the ſafety of Europe, what can enable them now to tell us that we are perfectly ſecure? If it was true that her bare poſſeſſion of Oczakow would be ſo dangerous, what muſt be the terror of

* This was an alluſion to a part of Mr. Grey's ſpeech, who had quoted a paſſage from Mr. Haſtings' Narrative of the Benares Expedition, to much the ſame effect.

Europe, when they ſaw our negociators put Ruſſia into the way of ſeizing even Conſtantinople itſelf? This was the ſtrong argument of my honourable friend, (Mr. Whitbread) and which he maintained with ſuch ſolid reaſoning, that a ſhadow of an anſwer has not been given to it. To illuſtrate the value of Oczakow, however, one honourable gentleman (Mr. Grant) went back to the reign of Elizabeth—nay, to the days of Philip and Demoſthenes. He told us, that when Demoſthenes, urging the Athenians to make war on Philip, reproached him with inattention to a few towns he had taken, the names of which they ſcarcely knew, telling them that thoſe towns were the keys by which he would in time invade and overcome Greece, he gave them a ſalutary warning of the danger that impended. But if the opponents of that great orator had prevailed, if they had ſucceeded in inducing their countrymen to acquieſce in the ſurrender not only of thoſe towns, but of conſiderably more, as in the preſent inſtance, with what face would

would he afterwards have declared to his countrymen, "True it was that theſe ſorry "and nameleſs towns were the keys to the "Acropolis itſelf, but you have ſurrendered "them; and what is the conſequence? You "are now in a ſtate of the moſt perfect ſe-"curity—you have now nothing to fear—you "have now the proſpect of ſixteen years of "peace before you!" I aſk, Sir, what would have been the reception even of Demoſthenes himſelf, if he had undertaken to ſupport ſuch an inconſiſtency?

Let us try this, however, the other way. In order to ſhew that His Majeſty's Miniſters merit the cenſure which is propoſed, I will admit that the preſervation of the Turks is neceſſary for the ſecurity of a balance of power. I truſt, at the ſame time, that this admiſſion, which I make merely for the argument, will not be diſingenuouſly quoted upon me, as hypothetical ſtatements too commonly are, for admiſſions of fact. What will the right honourable gentleman gain by it?

it? The Turks, by his arrangement, are left in a worſe ſituation than he found them in; for, previous to his interference, if Ruſſia had gone to Conſtantinople, he would have been unfettered by the ſtipulations which bind him now, and he and his ally might have interfered, to ſave the Porte from total deſtruction. Now, however, the poſſible and total extirpation of the Ottoman power is made to depend on a point ſo precarious, as their accepting the propoſal which the right honourable gentleman thought fit to agree to for them, within the ſpace of four months. And what is this propoſal? Why, that the Turks ſhould give up not only the object of the war they had begun, but this very Oczakow, which of itſelf was ſufficient, in the hands of Ruſſia, to overturn the balance. If, therefore, it was ſo important to recover Oczakow, it is not recovered, and Miniſters ought to be cenſured. If unimportant, they ought never to have demanded it. If ſo unimportant, they ought to be cenſured for arming; but if ſo important as they have ſtated it, they ought to be cenſured for diſarming

without

without having gotten it. Either way, therefore, the argument comes to the ſame point, and I care not on which ſide the gentlemen chuſe to take it up; for whether Oczakow be, as they told us laſt year, the key to Conſtantinople, on the preſervation of which to Turkey the balance of Europe depended, or, as they muſt tell us now, of no comparative importance, their conduct is equally to be condemned for diſarming, and puſillanimouſly yielding up the object, in the firſt inſtance; for committing the dignity of their Sovereign, and hazarding the peace of their country, in the ſecond. But they tell us, it is unfair to involve us in this dilemma; there was a middle courſe to be adopted. Oczakow was certainly of much importance; but this importance was to be determined upon by circumſtances. Sir, we are become nice, indeed, in our political arithmetic! In this calculating age, we aſcertain to a ſcruple what an object is really worth. Thus it ſeems that Oczakow was worth an armament, but not worth a war: it was worth a threat, but not worth carrying that threat into execution.

Sir,

Sir, I can conceive nothing ſo degrading and diſhonourable, as an argument ſuch as this. To hold out a menace, without ever ſeriouſly meaning to enforce it, conſtitutes, in common language, the true deſcription of a bully; applied to the tranſactions of a nation, the diſgrace is deeper, and the conſequences fatal to its honour. Yet ſuch is the preciſe conduct the King's Miniſters have made the nation to hold in the eyes of Europe, and which they defend by an argument, which, if urged in private life, would ſtamp a man with the character of a coward and a bully, and ſink him to the deepeſt abyſs of infamy and degradation. Sure I am, that this diſtinction never ſuggeſted itſelf to the reflection of a noble Duke, whoſe conduct throughout the whole of this buſineſs has evinced the manly character of his mind, unaccuſtomed to ſuch calculations! From him we learn the fact. He ſaid, in his place, that his colleagues thought it fit to riſk a threat to recover Oczakow, but would not riſk a war for it. Such conduct was not for him! it might

ſuit the characters of his colleagues in office, it could not his. But they ſay, it might be worth a war with the public opinion, but worth nothing without it. I cannot conceive any caſe, in which a great and wiſe nation, having committed itſelf by a menace, can withdraw that menace without diſgrace. The converſe of the propoſition I can eaſily conceive—that there may be a place, for inſtance, not fit to be aſked at all, but which being aſked for, and with a menace, it is fit to inſiſt upon. This undoubtedly goes to make a nation, like an individual, cautious of committing itſelf, becauſe there is no ground ſo tender as that of honour. How do Miniſters think on this ſubject? Oczakow was every thing by itſelf, but when they added to Oczakow the honour of England, it became nothing. Oczakow, by itſelf, threatened the balance of Europe; Oczakow and honour weighed nothing in the ſcale. Honour is, in their political arithmetic, a *minus* quantity, to be ſubtracted from the value of Oczakow. Sir, I am aſhamed

to

to ſtate this reaſoning; nor can I reflect on the foul ſtain it has fixed on the Engliſh name, without feeling mortified and humbled indeed! Their late colleague, the noble Duke, urged his ſentiments with the feelings that became him; feelings that form a ſtriking contraſt to thoſe that actuate the right honourable gentleman. He told his country, that when he had made up his mind to the neceſſity of demanding Oczakow, it was his opinion that it might have been obtained without a war; but having once demanded it, he felt it his duty not to ſhrink from the war that might enſue from the rejection of that demand, and preferred the reſignation of his office to the retracting that opinion. Far different was the conduct of the right honourable gentleman, though his advice was the ſame; and ſmall were the ſcruples he felt in tarniſhing the honour of his Sovereign, whoſe name he pledged to this demand, and afterwards obliged him to recede from it.

They tell us, however, and ſeem to value themſelves much upon it, that in abandoning the object for which they had armed, they acted in conformity to public opinion. Sir, I will fairly ſtate my ſentiments on this ſubject too. It certainly is right and prudent to conſult the public opinion; it is frequently wiſe to attend even to public prejudices, on ſubjects of ſuch infinite importance, as whether they are to have war or peace. But if, in the capacity of a ſervant to the Crown, I were to ſee, or ſtrongly to imagine that I ſaw, any meaſures going forward that threatened the peace or proſperity of the country, and if the emergency were ſo preſſing, as to demand the ſudden adoption of a deciſive courſe to avert the miſchief, I ſhould not heſitate one moment to act upon my own opinion. If the public opinion did not happen to ſquare with mine; if, after pointing out to them the danger, they did not ſee it in the ſame light with me, or if they conceived that another remedy was preferable to mine, I ſhould conſider it as due to my

King,

King, due to my country, due to my own honour, to retire, that they might purſue the plan which they thought better, by a fit inſtrument, that is, by a man who thought with them. Such would be my conduct on any ſubject where conſcientiouſly I could not ſurrender my opinion. If the caſe was doubtful, or the emergency not ſo preſſing, I ſhould be ready, perhaps, to ſurrender my opinion to that of the Public; but one thing is moſt clear in ſuch an event as this, namely, that I ought to give the Public the means of forming an opinion.

Do I ſtate this difference fairly?—If I do, and if the gentlemen over againſt me will admit, that in the inſtance before us the public opinion ought to have influenced them, it follows, that the public opinion ought to have been conſulted, before we were committed in the eyes of Europe, and that the country ought to have had the means, and the information neceſſary to form their judgement upon the true merits of this

this queſtion. Did the King's Miniſters act thus? Did they either take the public opinion, or did they give us the means of forming one? Nothing like it. On the 28th of March, the meſſage was brought down to this Houſe; on the 29th, we paſſed a vote of approbation, but no opinion was aſked from us, no explanation was given us; ſo far from it, we were expreſsly told, our advice was not wanted; that we had nothing to do with the prerogative of the Crown to make war; that all our buſineſs was to give confidence. So far with regard to this Houſe; and I cannot help thinking this conduct ſomewhat hard upon the majority, who certainly might have counted for ſomething in the general opinion, when the right honourable gentleman was collecting it, if he meant fairly ſo to do. I grant, indeed, that there are many ways by which the feeling and temper of the Public may be tolerably well known out of this Houſe, as well as in it. I grant, that the opinion of a reſpectable meeting at Mancheſter, of a meeting at

Nor-

Norwich, of a meeting at Wakefield, of public bodies of men in different parts of England, might give the right honourable gentleman a correct idea of the public opinion. Permit me to ſay alſo, that in the ſpeeches of the minority of this Houſe, he might find alſo the ground of public opinion—both what might give it riſe, and what might give it countenance. But was the majority of this Houſe the only body whoſe opinions were not worth conſulting? "I "travelled to Norwich, to York, Mancheſ-"ter, Wakefield, for opinions," will the right honourable gentleman ſay? "I liſtened "to the minority, I looked to Lord Stor-"mont, to the Earl of Guildford; but as "to you, my truſty majority, I did not look "to you! I had other buſineſs for you! it "is not your office to give opinions; your "buſineſs is to confide! You muſt pledge "yourſelf, in the firſt inſtance, to all I can "aſk from you, and perhaps ſome time in "the next year I may condeſcend to let you "know the grounds on which you are act-

"ing." Such is the language he holds to us, if his conduct were to be explained by words, and a conduct more indecent or preposterous is not eafily to be conceived. For it is neither more nor leſs than to tell us—"When I thought the Ottoman Power "in danger, I aſked for an armament to ſuc-"cour it. You approved and granted it to "me. The public ſenſe was againſt me, "and without minding you, I yielded to that "ſenſe. My opinion, however, remains "ſtill the ſame; though it muſt be confeſ-"ſed, that I led you into giving a ſanction "to my ſchemes, by a ſpecies of reaſoning "which it appears the country has ſaved "itſelf by reſiſting. But they were to blame. "I yet think that the exact contrary of what "was done, ought to have been done; and "that the peace and ſafety of Europe de-"pended upon it. But never mind how "you voted, or how directly oppoſite to the "general opinion, with which I complied, "was that opinion I perſuaded you to ſup-"port. Vote now that I was right in both

"—in

"—in the opinion I ſtill maintain, and in "my compliance with its oppoſite. The "peace of Europe is ſafe; I keep my place, "and all is right again."—But after all, the right honourable gentleman did not act from any deference to the public opinion; and to prove this, I have but to recal to your recollection dates. The meſſage was brought down, as I ſaid before, on the 28th of March; and in leſs than a week, I believe in four days, afterwards, before it was poſſible to collect the opinion of any one public body of men, their whole ſyſtem was reverſed. The change, therefore, could not come from the country, even had they been deſirous of conſulting it. But I have proved that they were not deſirous to have any opinion from any quarter; they came down with their purpoſes maſked and veiled to this Houſe, and tried all they could to preclude inquiry into what they were doing. Theſe are not the ſteps of men deſirous of acting by opinion. I hold it, however, to be now acknowledged, that it was not the public opi-

nion, but that of the minority in this Houſe, which compelled the Miniſters to relinquiſh their ill-adviſed projects; for a right honourable gentleman, who ſpoke laſt night (Mr. Dundas) owned the truth, in his own frank way. "We certainly," ſaid he, "do "not know that the opinion of the Public was "againſt us; we only know that a great party "in this country was againſt us, and there-"fore we apprehended, that though one cam-"paign might have been got through, at the "beginning of the next ſeſſion, they would "have interrupted us in procuring the ſup-"plies." I believe I quote the right honourable gentleman correctly; and here, Sir, let me pauſe, and thank him for the praiſe which he gives the gentlemen on this ſide the Houſe. Let me indulge the ſatisfaction of reflecting, that though we have not the emoluments of office—nor the patronage of power—yet we are not excluded from great influence on the meaſures of Government. We take pride to ourſelves, that at this moment we are not ſitting in a Committee of

Supply, voting enormous fleets and armies to carry into execution this calamitous meaſure. To us he honeſtly declares this credit to be due; and the country will, no doubt, feel the gratitude they owe us, for having ſaved them from the miſeries of war. An honourable gentleman, indeed, (Mr. Jenkinſon) has told us, that our oppoſition to this meaſure in its commencement, occaſioned its having been abandoned by the Miniſters; but he will not allow us the merit of having ſaved the country from a war by our interpoſition, but charges us with having prevented their obtaining the terms demanded, which would have been got without a war. I am glad to hear this argument; but muſt declare, in the name of the Minority, that we think ourſelves moſt unfairly treated by it, and forced into a reſponſibility that belongs, in no manner whatſoever, to our ſituation. The right honourable gentleman, when repeatedly preſſed on this ſubject, during the laſt ſeſſion, was uniform in affirming that he had reaſons for his conduct, to his mind ſo cogent and unan-

ſwerable, that he was morally certain of the indiſpenſable neceſſity of the meaſures he was purſuing. He has ſaid the ſame ſince, and to this hour continues his firſt opinion. If, therefore, the right honourable gentleman thought ſo, and thought at the ſame time that our arguments were likely to miſlead the country from its true intereſts, why did he continue ſilent? If public opinion was ſo neceſſary for him, that without it, as he tells us now, he could not proceed a ſingle ſtep, why did he ſuffer us to corrupt the paſſions, to blind and to pervert the underſtandings of the Public, to a degree that compelled his ſacrifice of this eſſential meaſure? Why did he quietly, and without concern, watch the prevalence of our falſe arguments? Why did he ſanction their progreſs, by never anſwering them, when he knew the conſequence muſt neceſſarily be, to defeat his deareſt object, and put the ſafety of his country to the hazard? Why did he not oppoſe ſome antidote to our poiſon? But having neglected to do this, (becauſe of his duty to preſerve State

ſecrets,

ſecrets, as he would have us believe) what ſhadow of a right, what poſſible pretext has he to come forward now, and accuſe us for thwarting his views, or to caſt the reſponſibility of his failure and diſgrace upon us, whoſe arguments he never anſwered, and to whom he obſtinately and invariably refuſed all ſort of information, by which we might have been enabled to form a better judgement, and poſſibly to agree with him on this ſubject? The right honourable gentleman, however, (Mr. Dundas) judges more fairly of us; and I thank him for the handſome acknowledgement he paid to the true character of the gentlemen on this ſide of the Houſe; for by owning, that becauſe we did not happen to approve of this armament it was abandoned, he owns another fact—that we are not what another honourable gentleman (Mr. Steele) choſe to repreſent us, an indiſcriminate faction, that diſapproves of every thing, right and wrong. This is clearly manifeſt from his own admiſſions, for giving up when they found we diſapproved, they muſt have

begun.

begun in the idea that we ſhould approve. We approved in the caſe of Holland, and in the caſe of Spain. In the firſt caſe we did ſo, becauſe the rectitude of the thing was ſo clear and manifeſt, as that every wellwiſher to England muſt approve. We did ſo in the caſe of Spain, becauſe the objects were explained to us—The inſult given, and the reparation demanded, were both before us. But had the right honourable gentleman any right, becauſe we agreed to the Dutch and Spaniſh armaments, to anticipate the conſent of Oppoſition to this? It was inſulting to impute the poſſibility to us!—What, agree to take the money out of the pockets of the people, without an inſult explained, or an object held up! It is ſaid the object was ſtated, and that the means only were left to conjecture. That the *object* propoſed to the Houſe, was an armament to make a peace, and Oczakow was ſuppoſed to be the *means* by which that peace was to be effected. Sir, it is almoſt conſtantly my misfortune to be differing from the right honourable gentle-

man

man about the import of the words *object* and *means*. In my way of uſing theſe words, I ſhould have directly tranſpoſed them, and called the armament the *means* of effecting peace, and Ockzakow the *object* of that armament.—And the event proves that Miniſters thought as I do; for they gave up that object, becauſe they knew they could get the end they propoſed by their armament without it. This object, indeed, whatever was its importance, whether it was or was not, as we have alternately heard it aſſerted and denied, the key of Conſtantinople, nay, as ſome wild and fanciful people had almoſt perſuaded themſelves, the key to our poſſeſſions in the Eaſt Indies, the King's Miniſters have completely renounced; and ſeem by their conduct to have cared very little what became of that or Conſtantinople itſelf. The balance of Europe, however, is perfectly ſafe, they tell us; and on that point we have nothing more to apprehend. The enormous acceſſion of power to Ruſſia, from the poſſeſſion of Oczakow, ſo far from affecting Great Britain,

begun in the idea that we ſhould approve. We approved in the caſe of Holland, and in the caſe of Spain. In the firſt caſe we did ſo, becauſe the rectitude of the thing was ſo clear and manifeſt, as that every wellwiſher to England muſt approve. We did ſo in the caſe of Spain, becauſe the objects were explained to us—The inſult given, and the reparation demanded, were both before us. But had the right honourable gentleman any right, becauſe we agreed to the Dutch and Spaniſh armaments, to anticipate the conſent of Oppoſition to this? It was inſulting to impute the poſſibility to us!—What, agree to take the money out of the pockets of the people, without an inſult explained, or an object held up! It is ſaid the object was ſtated, and that the means only were left to conjecture. That the *object* propoſed to the Houſe, was an armament to make a peace, and Oczakow was ſuppoſed to be the *means* by which that peace was to be effected. Sir, it is almoſt conſtantly my misfortune to be differing from the right honourable gentle-

man

man about the import of the words *object* and *means*. In my way of uſing theſe words, I ſhould have directly tranſpoſed them, and called the armament the *means* of effecting peace, and Ockzakow the *object* of that armament.—And the event proves that Miniſters thought as I do; for they gave up that object, becauſe they knew they could get the end they propoſed by their armament without it. This object, indeed, whatever was its importance, whether it was or was not, as we have alternately heard it aſſerted and denied, the key of Conſtantinople, nay, as ſome wild and fanciful people had almoſt perſuaded themſelves, the key to our poſſeſſions in the Eaſt Indies, the King's Miniſters have completely renounced; and ſeem by their conduct to have cared very little what became of that or Conſtantinople itſelf. The balance of Europe, however, is perfectly ſafe, they tell us; and on that point we have nothing more to apprehend. The enormous acceſſion of power to Ruſſia, from the poſſeſſion of Oczakow, ſo far from affecting Great Britain,

is

is not likely, according to what the Miniſters muſt aſſure us, to diſturb the tranquillity of her neareſt neighbours. That Oczakow, therefore, was at any time an object ſufficient to juſtify their interference, I have ſtated many reaſons for concluding will not be alledged this night. Some of the gentlemen on the other ſide, indeed, have advanced other grounds, and told us (I confeſs it is for the firſt time) that in this war the Empreſs of Ruſſia was the aggreſſor; that on her part the war was offenſive, and that it became us to interfere to ſtop her progreſs. They tell us of various encroachments in the Cuban, of hoſtilities ſyſtematically carried on in violation of treaties, and many other inſtances; not one of which they have attempted to prove by a ſingle document, or have reſted on any other foundation than their own aſſertions. But to theſe, Sir, I ſhall oppoſe the authority of Miniſters themſelves; for, in one of the diſpatches of the Duke of Leeds to Mr. Whitworth, he deſires him to communicate to the Court of Peterſburgh, that if they

will

will conſent to make peace with the Turks on the *ſtatus quo*, the allies will conſent to guarantee the Crimea to them, "*the object* "*of the war*," as he ſtates it to be. I deſire no farther proof than this, that we always conſidered the Turks as the aggreſſors; for it follows, that where any place, in the poſſeſſion of one Power, is made the object of a war by another, the Power claiming that object is the aggreſſor. If, for example, we were at war with Spain, and Gibraltar the object, Spain of courſe would be the aggreſſor: the contrary, if the Havannah were the object. The King of England, therefore, by the diſpatch which I have quoted, has, in words and in fact, acknowledged the Turks to have been the aggreſſors in this war, by making pretenſions to a province ſolemnly ceded to Ruſſia in the year 1783. I can ſcarcely think that Miniſters mean to contend that ceſſion by treaty does not give right to poſſeſſion. Where are we to look, therefore, to aſcertain the right of a country to any place or territory, but to the *laſt* treaty? To

what would the oppoſite doctrine lead? France might claim Canada, ceded in 1763, or we Tobago, ceded in 1783. It might be urged that they took advantage of our diſpute with our own colonies, and that the treaty gave no right. Canada, Jamaica, every thing might be queſtioned. Where would be the peace of Europe, if theſe doctrines were to be acted on? Every country muſt continue in a ſtate of endleſs perplexity, armament, and preparations. But happily for mankind, a different principle prevails in the law of nations; there the laſt treaty gives the right, and upon that we muſt aver, that if, as the diſpatch ſays, the Crimea was the object, the Turk was the aggreſſor.

What, therefore, was the right claimed by the right honourable gentleman to enter into this diſpute?—I will anſwer, The right of a proud man, anxious to play a lofty part. France had gone off the ſtage—the character of the miſerable diſturber of empires was vacant, and he reſolved to boaſt and vapour,

and

and play his anti-tricks and geſtures on the ſame theatre. And what has been the firſt effects of this new experiment upon the Britiſh nation? That in the pride and zenith of our power, we have miſerably diſgraced ourſelves in the eyes of Europe—that the name of his Majeſty has been ſported with, and ſtained; that the people of England have been inflamed, their commerce diſturbed, the moſt valuable citizens dragged from their houſes, and half a million of money added to the public burdens. And here, Sir, in juſtice to my own feelings, I cannot paſs over wholly in ſilence the fate of that valuable body of our fellow-citizens, who are more particularly the victims of theſe falſe alarms, and by whom the moſt bitter portion of the common calamity muſt be borne. I am compelled to admit, that every State has a right, in the ſeaſon of danger, to claim the ſervices of all, or any of its members; that the "*ſalus populi, ſuprema lex eſt.*" Tenderneſs and conſideration in the uſe of ſuch extenſive powers is all I can recommend to

thoſe whoſe buſineſs it is to call them into action. But here I muſt lament, in common with every feeling mind, that unneceſſary barbarity which dragged them from their homes, deprived them of their liberty, and tore them from the induſtrious exerciſe of thoſe modes of life by which they earned ſupport for their families, wantonly, cruelly, and without pretext, becauſe without the ſmalleſt intention of employing them. The gentlemen well know what I ſtate to be a fact; for they know that their ſyſtem was changed, and their object abandoned, before even they had begun to iſſue preſs-warrants.

I return, Sir, to the diſgraceful condition in which the right honourable gentleman has involved us. Let us ſee whether what I have ſaid on this point be not literally true. The Empreſs of Ruſſia offered, early in the year 1790, to depart from the terms ſhe had at firſt thrown out, namely, that Beſſarabia, Wallachia, and Moldavia, ſhould be independent of the Ottoman Power. This, it appears, ſhe

yielded

yielded upon the amicable repreſentations of the allied Powers, and ſubſtituted in the room of them thoſe conditions which have ſince been conceded to her, namely, that the Dnieſter ſhould be the boundary between the two empires, and all former treaties ſhould be confirmed. "Then," ſay Miniſters, "if "we gained this by ſimple negociation, what "may we not gain by an armament?" Thus judging of her puſillanimity by their own, they threatened her. What did ſhe do? Peremptorily refuſed to depart one atom from her laſt conditions; and theſe I aſſert were in the poſſeſſion of his Majeſty's Miniſters long before the armament: they knew not only this early in the month of March, but likewiſe the reſolution of the Empreſs not to riſe in her demands, notwithſtanding any farther ſucceſs that might attend her arms. The memorial of the Court of Denmark, which they have, for reaſons beſt known to themſelves, refuſed us, but which was circulated in every court, and publiſhed in every newspaper in Europe, fully informed them of

theſe matters. But the King's Miniſters, with an abſurdity of which there is no example, called upon the country to arm. Why? Not becauſe they meant to employ the armament againſt her, but in the fanciful hope, that becauſe, in an amicable negociation, the Empreſs had been prevailed upon not to preſs the demand of Wallachia, Moldavia, and Beſſarabia, as independent ſovereignties, they ſhould infallibly ſucceed by arming, and not employing that armament, in perſuading her to abandon all the reſt! And what was the end? Why, that after pledging the King's name, in the moſt deliberate and ſolemn manner; after lofty vapouring, menacing, promiſing, denying, turning and turning again; after keeping up the parade of an armament for four months, accompanied with thoſe ſevere meaſures, to be regretted even when neceſſary, to be reprobated when not, the right honourable gentleman crouches humbly at her feet; intreats, ſubmiſſively ſupplicates of her moderation, that ſhe will grant him ſome ſmall

trifle

trifle of what he aſks, if it is but by way of a boon; and finding at laſt that he can get nothing, either by threats or his prayers, gives up the whole, preciſely as ſhe inſiſted upon having it.

The right honourable gentleman, however, is determined that this Houſe ſhall take the whole of this diſgrace upon itſelf. I heard him, with much delight, on a former day, quote largely from that excellent and philoſophical work, "The Wealth of Nations." In almoſt the firſt page of that book, he will find it laid down as a principle, that by a diviſion of labour in the different occupations of life, the objects to which it is applied are perfected, time is ſaved, dexterity improved, and the general ſtock of ſcience augmented: that by joint effort, and reciprocal accommodation, the ſevereſt taſks are accompliſhed, and difficulties ſurmounted, too ſtubborn for the labour of a ſingle hand. Thus, in the building of a great palace, we obſerve the work to be parcelled out into different departments, and

diſtributed and ſubdivided into various degrees, ſome higher, ſome lower, to ſuit the capacities and condition of thoſe who are employed in its conſtruction.—There is the architect that invents the plan, and erects the ſtately columns; there is the duſtman and the nightman to clear away the rubbiſh. The right honourable gentleman applies theſe principles to his politics, and in the diviſion and caſt of parts for the job we are now to execute for him, has reſerved for himſelf the higher and more reſpectable ſhare of the buſineſs, and leaves all the dirty work to us. Is he aſked why the Houſe of Commons made the armament laſt year? He anſwers, "the "Houſe of Commons did not make the ar- "mament! I made it. The Houſe of Com- "mons only approved it."—Is he aſked why he gave up the object of the armament, after he had made it? "I did not give it up!" he exclaims: "I think this ſame of its neceſ- "ſity as ever; it is the Houſe of Commons "that gives it up: it is the Houſe that ſup- "ports the nation in their ſenſeleſs clamour

againſt

"againſt my meaſures: it is to this Houſe "that you muſt look for the ſhame and "guilt of your diſgrace." To himſelf he takes the more conſpicuous character of menacer. It is he that diſtributes provinces, and limits empires; while he leaves to this Houſe the humbler office of licking the duſt, and begging forgiveneſs;

"Not mine theſe groans—
"Theſe ſighs that iſſue, or theſe tears that flow."

"I am forced into theſe ſubmiſſions by a low, "contracted, grovelling, mean-ſpirited, and "ignorant people!" But this is not all. It rarely happens, that in begging pardon, when men determine upon that courſe, they have not ſome benefit in view, or that the profit to be got is not meant to counterbalance, in ſome meaſure, the honour to be ſacrificed. Let us ſee how the right honourable gentleman managed this.—On the firſt indication of hoſtile meaſures againſt Ruſſia, 135 Members of this Houſe divided againſt the adoption of them. This it was, according to a

right honourable gentleman who ſpoke in the debate yeſterday, (Mr. Dundas) that induced Miniſters to abandon their firſt object; but not like the Duke of Leeds, who candidly avowed, that if he could have once brought himſelf to give up the claim of Oczakow, he would not have ſtood out for the raſing its fortifications, or any ſuch terms. The Miniſters determine that the nation at leaſt ſhall reap no benefit from the reverſal of their ſyſtem. "You have reſiſted our pro-"jects," ſay they; "you have diſcovered "and expoſed our incapacity; you have "made us the ridicule of Europe, and ſuch "we ſhall appear to poſterity: you have de-"feated, indeed, our intentions of involving "you in a war; but *you* ſhall not be the "gainers by it! *you* ſhall not ſave your mo-"ney! We abandon Oczakow, as you "compel us to do, but we will keep up the "armament, if it is only to ſpite you!" Determined to act this diſgraceful part, their next care was to do it in the moſt diſgraceful manner; and as they had dragged Parliament

and

their King through the dirt and mire, they reſolved to exhibit them in this offenſive plight to the eyes of Europe. To do this, they did not care to truſt to the Miniſter we had at Peterſburgh; a gentleman diſtinguiſhed for amiable manners, and by the faithful, the vigilant, and the able diſcharge of his duty. Why was the management of the negociation taken from him? Was he too proud for this ſervice? No man is too proud to do his duty; and of all our foreign Miniſters, Mr. Whitworth I ſhould think the very laſt, to whom it could be reproached that he is remiſs in fulfilling the directions he receives, in their utmoſt ſtrictneſs. But a new man was to be found; one whoſe reputation for talents and honour might operate, as they hoped, as a ſort of ſet-off againſt the incapacity he was to cure, and the national honour he was deputed to ſurrender. Was it thus determined, becauſe in looking round their diplomatic body, there was no man to be ſelected from it, whoſe character aſſimilated with the dirty job he

was to execute? As there was honour to be ſacrificed, a ſtain to be fixed upon the national character, engagements to be retracted, and a friend to be abandoned, did it never occur to them that there was *one man* upon their diplomatic liſt, who would have been pronounced by general acclamation thoroughly qualified in ſoul and qualities for this ſervice? Such a perſon they might have found, and not ſo occupied as to make it inconvenient to employ him; they would have found him abſent from his ſtation, under the pretence of attending his duty in this Houſe, though he does not chuſe often to make his appearance here. Inſtead of this, however, they increaſed the diſhonour that they doomed us to ſuffer, by ſending a gentleman endowed with every virtue and accompliſhment, who had acquired, in the ſervice of the Empreſs of Ruſſia, at an early period of his life, a character for bravery and enterpriſe, that rendered him perſonally eſteemed by her, and in whom fine talents, and elegant manner, ripened by habit and experience, had con-

firmed

firmed the flattering promiſe of his youth. Did they think that the ſhabbineſs of their meſſage was to be done away by the worth of the meſſenger? If I were to ſend an humiliating apology to any perſon, would it change its quality by being entruſted to Lord Rodney, Admiral Pigot, my honourable friend behind me, (General Burgoyne) Lord Cornwallis, Sir Henry Clinton, Sir William Howe, or any other gallant and brave officer? Certainly not.

It was my fortune, in very early life, to have ſet out in habits of particular intimacy with Mr. Fawkener, and however circumſtances may have intervened to ſuſpend that intimacy, circumſtances ariſing from wide differences in political opinion, they never have altered the ſentiments of private eſteem which I have uniformly felt for him; and with every amiable and conciliating quality that belongs to man, I know him to be one from whom improper ſubmiſſions are the leaſt to be expected. Well, Sir, theſe gentlemen,

tlemen, Mr. Whitworth and Mr. Fawkener, commence the negociation, by the offer of three diſtinct propoſitions, each of them better than the other, and accompany it with an expreſſion ſomewhat remarkable, namely, that this negociation is to be as unlike all the others as poſſible, and to be "*founded* "*in perfect candour*." To prove this, they ſubmit at once to the Ruſſian Miniſters "all "that their inſtructions enable them to pro- "poſe." Who would not have imagined, according to the plain import of theſe words, that unleſs the Empreſs had aſſented to one of theſe propoſitions, all amicable interpoſition would have been at an end, and war the iſſue? The "perfect candour" promiſed in the beginning of their note, leads them to declare explicitly, that unleſs the fortifications of Oczakow be raſed, or the Turks are allowed as an equivalent to keep both the banks of the Dneiſter, the allies cannot propoſe any terms to them. What anſwer do they receive? An unequivocal rejection of every one of their propoſitions; accompa-

nied, however, with a declaration, to which I ſhall ſoon return, that the navigation of that river ſhall be free to all the world, and a reference to theſe maxims of policy which have invariably actuated the Empreſs of Ruſſia in her intercourſe with neutral nations, whoſe commerce ſhe has at all times protected and encouraged. With this declaration the Britiſh Plenipotentiaries declare themſelves perfectly contented; nay more, they engage, that if the Turks ſhould refuſe theſe conditions, and continue obſtinate longer than four months, the allied Courts "will abandon "the termination of the war to the events "it may produce." And here ends for ever all care for the Ottoman empire, all ſolicitude about the balance of power. The right honourable gentleman will interpoſe no farther to ſave either, but reſts the whole of a meaſure, once ſo indiſpenſable to our ſafety, upon this doubtful iſſue, whether the Turks will accept in December thoſe very terms which, in July, the Britiſh Miniſters could not venture to propoſe to them!

Sir,

Sir, we may look in vain to the events of former times for a diſgrace parallel to what we have ſuffered. Lewis the Fourteenth, a monarch often named in our debates, and whoſe reign exhibits more than any other the extremes of proſperous and of adverſe fortune, never, in the midſt of his moſt humiliating diſtreſſes, ſtooped to ſo deſpicable a ſacrifice of all that can be dear to man. The war of the ſucceſſion, unjuſtly began by him, had reduced his power, had ſwallowed up his armies and his navies, had deſolated his provinces, had drained his treaſures, and deluged the earth with the blood of the beſt and moſt faithful of his ſubjects. Exhauſted by his various calamities, he offered at one time to his enemies to relinquiſh all the objects for which he had begun the war: that proud monarch ſued for peace, and was content to receive it from our moderation. But when it was made a condition of that peace, that he ſhould turn his arms againſt his grandſon, and compel him by force to relinquiſh the throne of Spain—

hum-

humbled, exhauſted, conquered as he was, misfortune had not yet bowed his ſpirit to conditions ſo hard as theſe. We know the event: he perſiſted ſtill in the war, until the folly and wickedneſs of Queen Anne's Miniſters enabled him to conclude the peace of Utrecht, on terms conſiderably leſs diſadvantageous even than thoſe he had himſelf propoſed. And ſhall *we*, Sir, the pride of our age, the terror of Europe, ſubmit to this humiliating ſacrifice of our honour? Have *we* ſuffered a defeat at Blenheim? Shall we, with our increaſing proſperity, our widely-diffuſed capital, our navy, the juſt ſubject of our common exultation, overflowing coffers, that enable us to give back to the people what, in the hour of calamity, we were compelled to take from them; fluſhed with a recent triumph over Spain, and yet more than all, while our old rival and enemy was incapable of diſturbing us, ſhall it be for us to yield to what France diſdained in the hour of her ſharpeſt diſtreſs, and exhibit ourſelves to the world, the

ſole example in its annals of ſuch an abject and pitiful degradation?

But gentlemen inform us now, in juſtification, as I ſuppoſe they mean it, of all theſe meaſures, that to effect a peace between Ruſſia and the Porte, was only the oſtenſible cauſe of our armament, or at leaſt was not the ſole cauſe; and that Miniſters were under ſome apprehenſion leſt the Emperor, if the allies were to diſarm, ſhould inſiſt on better terms from the Turks, than he had agreed to accept by the convention of Reichenbach. This I cannot believe. When His Majeſty ſends a meſſage to inform his Parliament, that he thinks it neceſſary to arm for a ſpecific purpoſe, I cannot ſuppoſe that a falſehood has been put into His Majeſty's mouth; and that the armament, which he propoſes as neceſſary for one purpoſe, is intended for another.—If the right honourable gentleman ſhall tell me, that although the war between Ruſſia and the Porte was the real cauſe of equipping the armament, yet that being once equipped,

equipped, it was wiſe to keep it up when no longer wanted on that account, becauſe the Emperor ſeemed inclined to depart from the convention of Reichenbach; then I anſwer, that it was his duty to have come with a ſecond meſſage to Parliament, expreſsly ſtating this new object, with the neceſſary information, to enable the Houſe to judge of its propriety. Another of the arguments for continuing the armament after the object was relinquiſhed, is, that Ruſſia might have inſiſted on harder terms, not conceiving herſelf bound by offers which we had refuſed to accept. I perfectly agree with gentlemen, that after the repeated offer of thoſe terms, on the part of Ruſſia, and the rejection of them by us, the Empreſs was not bound to adhere to them, in all poſſible events and contingencies. If the war had continued, ſhe would have had a right to farther indemnification for the expence of it. But was it not worth the Miniſter's while to try the good faith of the Empreſs of Ruſſia, after ſhe had ſo ſolemnly pledged herſelf to all Europe

that ſhe would not riſe in her demands? The experiment would have been made with little trouble; by the ſimple expedient of ſending a meſſenger to aſk the queſtion. The object of his armament would have ſuffered little by the delay, as an anſwer from the Ruſſian Court might have been had in five or ſix weeks. Was it reaſonable in Miniſters to ſuppoſe, that becauſe, in the early part of the negociation, the Empreſs had ſhewn ſo much regard to us as actually to give up whatever pretenſions ſhe had formed to other provinces of the Turkiſh empire, ſolely with the view of obtaining our concurrence to the principle on which ſhe offered to make peace, ſhe would revert to thoſe very pretenſions the inſtant ſhe had obtained that concurrence on our part, for the benefit of which ſhe had ſacrificed them? Surely, as I have ſaid, it was worth while to make the experiment: but ſimple and obvious as this was, a very different courſe was adopted. Oczakow, indeed, was relinquiſhed before the armament began, as we may find by comparing the

date of the preſs-warrants with that of the Duke of Leeds's reſignation. As ſoon as the King's meſſage was delivered to Parliament, a meſſenger was diſpatched to Berlin with an intimation of the reſolution to arm. This, perhaps, was raſhly done; as they might have foreſeen that the meaſure would probably meet with oppoſition, and much time could not have been loſt by waiting the event of the firſt debate. No ſooner was the diviſion known, than a ſecond meſſenger was ſent off to overtake and ſtop the diſpatches of the firſt; and this brings me to another argument, which I confeſs appears to me very unlikely to help them out. They tell us, that the King of Pruſſia having armed in conſequence of our aſſurances of ſupport, we could not diſarm before we knew the ſentiments of the Court of Berlin, without the imputation of leaving our ally in the lurch. Did we wait for the ſentiments of that Court to determine whether Oczakow was to be given up or not? Sir, when that meaſure was reſolved upon, the right honourable

gentleman

gentleman actually had abandoned his ally; and that ſuch was the general ſenſe of the Court of Berlin, I believe can be teſtified by every Engliſhman who was there at the time. No ſooner did the ſecond meſſenger arrive, and the contents of his diſpatches become known, than a moſt general indignation roſe againſt the conduct of the right honourable gentleman; and I am well enough informed on the ſubject to ſtate to this Houſe, that not an Engliſhman could ſhew his face in that capital, without expoſing himſelf to mortification, perhaps to inſult. But, between the 28th of March, when the meſſage was brought down to this Houſe, and the 2d or 3d of April, when the ſecond meſſenger was diſpatched with the news that Miniſters had abandoned the object of it, the armament could not have been materially advanced. Why then was it perſiſted in? The right honourable gentleman cannot argue, that he kept up the armament in compliance with his engagements with Pruſſia, when the armament, in fact, did not exiſt, and when it

had been begun but four or five days previous to his renouncing the object of it. That could not have been his motive. What then was the motive? Why, that he was too proud to own his error, and valued leſs the money and tranquillity of the people, than the appearance of firmneſs, when he had renounced the reality. Falſe ſhame is the parent of many crimes. By falſe ſhame, a man may be tempted to commit a murder, to conceal a robbery. Influenced by this falſe ſhame, the Miniſters robbed the people of their money, the ſeamen of their liberty, their families of ſupport and protection, and all this to conceal that they had undertaken a ſyſtem which was not fit to be purſued. If they ſay that they did this, apprehenſive that without the terror of an armament Ruſſia would not ſtand to the terms which they had refuſed to accept, they do no more than acknowledge, that by the inſolence of their arming, and the precipitancy of their ſubmiſſion, they had either ſo provoked her reſentment, or excited her contempt, that ſhe would

would not even condeſcend to agree to her own propoſitions when approved by them. But however they might have thought her diſpoſed to act on this ſubject, it was at leaſt their duty to try whether ſuch would have been her conduct or not.

To prove that the terms to which they agreed at laſt were the ſame with thoſe they before rejected, all I feel it neceſſary for me to obſerve, is, that the free navigation of the river Dnieſter, the only novelty introduced into them, was implied in propoſing it as a boundary; for it is a well-known rule, that the boundary between two powers muſt be as free to the one as to the other. True, ſays the Miniſter, but we have got the free navigation for the ſubjects of other powers, particularly for thoſe of Poland. If this be an advantage, it is an advantage he has gained by conceſſion; for if he had not agreed that the river ſhould be the boundary, the navigation would not have been free. The Turks offered no ſuch ſtipulation, had they been

put

put in poſſeſſion of both the banks; beſides which, as a noble Duke, whom I have already quoted, well obſerved, it is an advantage, whatever may be its value, which can ſubſiſt only in time of peace. It is not, I ſuppoſe, imagined that the navigation will be free in time of war. They have then got nothing that deſerves the name of a "modification," a term, I muſt here obſerve, the uſe of which is not juſtified even by the original memorial, where the ſenſe is more accurately expreſſed by the French word "*ra-douciſſement.*" Was it then for ſome *ra-douciſſement* that they continued their armament? Was it to ſay to the Empreſs, when they had conceded every thing, "We have "given you all you aſked; give us ſome-"thing that we may hold out to the pub-"lic, ſomething that we may uſe againſt "the minority; that minority whom we "have endeavoured to repreſent as your "allies. We have ſacrificed our allies, the "Turks, to you; you can do no leſs than "ſacrifice your allies, the minority, to us?"

If I had been to adviſe the Empreſs on the ſubject, I would have counſelled her; grant the Britiſh Miniſter ſomething of this ſort. I would even have adviſed her to raze the fortifications of Oczakow, if he had inſiſted on it; I would have appealed from her policy to her generoſity, and ſaid, Grant him this as an apology, for he ſtands much in need of it. His whole object was to appear to gain ſomething, no matter what, by continuing the armament; and even in this laſt pitiful and miſerable object he has failed. If, after all, I aſk, whether theſe terms are contained in the peace that we have concluded for the Turks, or rather which the Turks concluded for themſelves? the anſwer is, "We have no authentic copy of it." Is this what we have got by our arms, by diſtreſſing our commerce, dragging our ſeamen from their homes and occupations, and ſquandering our money? Is this the efficacy of our interference, and the triumph of our wiſdom and our firmneſs? The Turks have at length concluded a peace, of which they do not

even

even condeſcend to favour us with a copy, ſo that we know what it is only by report, and the balance of Europe, late in ſo much danger, and of ſo much importance, is left for them to ſettle without conſulting us! Is it for this that we employed ſuch men as Mr. Fawkener and Mr. Whitworth? They were ſent to negociate for the materials of a ſpeech, and failed. But what are the complaints that private friendſhip has a right to make to thoſe of an inſulted public? Half a million of money is ſpent, the people alarmed and interrupted in their proper purſuits by the apprehenſion of a war, and for what? For the reſtoration of Oczakow? No; Oczakow is not reſtored. To ſave the Turks from being too much humbled? No; they are now in a worſe ſituation than they would have been, had we never armed at all. If Ruſſia had perſevered in that ſyſtem of encroachment of which ſhe is accuſed, we could, as I obſerved before, then have aſſiſted them unembarraſſed. We are now tied down by treaties and fettered by ſtipulations; we have even guaran-

teed to Ruſſia what we before ſaid it would be unſafe for the Turks to yield, and dangerous to the peace of Europe for Ruſſia to poſſeſs. This is what the public have got by the armament. What then was the private motive?

Scilicet, ut Turno contingat regia conjux,
Nos, animæ viles, inhumata inſletaque turba,
Sternamur campis———

The Miniſter gained, or thought he was to gain, an excuſe for his raſhneſs and miſconduct, and to purchaſe this excuſe was the public money and the public quiet wantonly ſacrificed. There are ſome effects, which, to combine with their cauſes, is almoſt ſufficient to drive men mad! That the pride, the folly, the preſumption of a ſingle perſon, ſhall be able to involve a whole people in wretchedneſs and diſgrace, is more than philoſophy can teach mortal patience to endure. Here are the true weapons of the enemies of our conſtitution! Here may we ſearch for the ſource of thoſe ſeditious writings, meant

meant either to weaken our attachment to the conſtitution, by depreciating its value, or that loudly tell us we have no conſtitution at all. We may blame, we may reprobate ſuch doctrines, but while we furniſh thoſe who circulate them with arguments ſuch as theſe; while the example of this day ſhews us to what degree the fact is true, we muſt not wonder if the purpoſes they are meant to anſwer be but too ſucceſsful.

They argue, that a conſtitution cannot be right where ſuch things are poſſible, much leſs ſo when they are practiſed without puniſhment. This, Sir, is a ſerious reflection to every man who loves the conſtitution of England. Againſt the vain theories of men, who project fundamental alterations upon grounds of more ſpeculative objection, I can eaſily defend it: but when they recur to theſe facts, and ſhew me how we may be doomed to all the horrors of war, by the caprice of an individual, who will not even condeſcend to explain his reaſons, I can only fly to this Houſe, and exhort you to rouſe from your lethargy

of

of confidence, into the active miſtruſt and vigilant control which is your duty and your office.

Without recurring to the duſt to which the Miniſter has been humbled, and the dirt he has been dragged through, if we aſk for what has the peace of the Public been diſturbed? for what is that man preſſed and dragged like a felon to a ſervice that ſhould be honourable? We muſt be anſwered, For ſome three quarters of a mile of barren territory on the banks of the Dnieſter! In the name of all we value, give us, when ſuch inſtances are quoted in derogation of our conſtitution, ſome right to anſwer, that theſe are not its principles, but the monſtrous abuſes intruded into its practice. Let it not be ſaid, that becauſe the executive power, for an adequate and evident cauſe, may adopt meaſures that require expence without conſulting Parliament, we are to convert the exception into a rule; to reverſe the principle; and that it is now to be

be aſſumed, that the people's money may be ſpent for any cauſe, or for none, without either ſubmitting the exigency to the judgement of their repreſentatives, or inquiring into it afterwards, unleſs we can make out ground for a criminal charge againſt the executive Government. Let us diſclaim theſe abuſes, and return to the conſtitution. I am not one of thoſe who lay down rules as univerſal and abſolute, becauſe I think there is hardly a political or moral maxim which is univerſally true, but I maintain the general rule to be, that before the public money be voted away, the occaſion that calls for it ſhould be fairly ſtated, for the conſideration of thoſe who are the proper guardians of the public money. Had the Miniſter explained his ſyſtem to Parliament, before he called for money to ſupport it, and Parliament had decided that it was not worth ſupporting, he would have been ſaved the mortification and diſgrace in which his own honour is involved, and by being furniſhed with a juſt excuſe to Pruſſia for withdrawing from the

pro-

proſecution of it, have ſaved that of his Sovereign and his country, which he has irrecoverably tarniſhed. Is unanimity neceſſary to his plans? He can be ſure of it in no manner, unleſs he explains them to this Houſe, who are certainly much better judges than he is of the degree of unanimity with which they are likely to be received. Why then did he not conſult us? Becauſe he had other purpoſes to anſwer in the uſe he meant to make of his majority. Had he opened himſelf to the Houſe at firſt, and had we declared againſt him, he might have been ſtopped in the firſt inſtance: had we declared for him, we might have held him too firmly to his principle, to ſuffer his receding from it as he has done. Either of theſe alternatives he dreaded. It was his policy to decline our opinions, and to exact our confidence, that thus having the means of acting either way, according to the exigencies of his perſonal ſituation, he might come to Parliament, and tell us what our opinions ought to be; which ſet of principles would be moſt

expedient to ſhelter him from inquiry, and from puniſhment. It is for this he comes before us with a poor and pitiful excuſe, that for want of the unanimity he expected, there was reaſon to fear, if the war ſhould go to a ſecond campaign, that it might be obſtructed. Why not ſpeak out, and own the real fact—he feared that a ſecond campaign might occaſion the loſs of his place. Let him keep but his place, he cares not what elſe he loſes. With other men, reputation and glory are the objects of ambition; power and place are coveted but as the means of theſe. For the Miniſter, power and place are ſufficient of themſelves. With them he is content; for them he can calmly ſacrifice every proud diſtinction that ambition covets, and every noble proſpect to which it points the way!

Sir, there is yet an argument which I have not ſufficiently noticed. It has been ſaid, as a ground for his defence, that he was prevented from gaining what he demanded by

our oppoſition; and, but for this, Ruſſia would have complied, and never would have hazarded a war. Sir, I believe the direct contrary, and my belief is as good as their aſſertion, unleſs they will give us ſome proof of its veracity. Until then, I have a right to aſk them, what if Ruſſia had not complied? Worſe and worſe for him! He muſt have gone on, redoubling his menaces and expences, the Empreſs of Ruſſia continuing inflexible as ever, but for the ſalutary oppoſition which preſerved him from his extremity of ſhame. I am not contending that armaments are never neceſſary to enforce negociations; but it is one, and that not the leaſt, of the evils attending the right honourable gentleman's miſconduct, that by keeping up the parade of an armament, never meant to be employed, he has in a great meaſure deprived us of the uſe of this method of negociating, whenever it may be neceſſary to apply it effectually. For if you propoſe to arm in concert with any foreign Power, that Power will anſwer, "What

"ſe-

"ſecurity can you give me that you will "perſevere in that ſyſtem? You ſay you "cannot go to war, unleſs your people are "unanimous." If you aim to negociate againſt a foreign Power, that Power will ſay, "I have only to perſiſt—the Britiſh Miniſter "may threaten, but he dare not act—he will "not hazard the loſs of his place by a war." A right honourable gentleman (Mr. Dundas) in excuſe for withholding papers, aſked what foreign Power would negociate with an Engliſh Cabinet, if their ſecrets were likely to be developed, and expoſed to the idle curioſity of a Houſe of Commons?—I do not dread ſuch a conſequence; but if I muſt be puſhed to extremes, if nothing were left me but an option between oppoſite evils, I ſhould have no heſitation in chuſing. "Better have "no dealings with them at all," I ſhould anſwer, "if the right of inquiry into every "part of a negociation they think fit, and "of knowing why they are to vote the mo-"ney of their conſtituents, be denied the "Houſe of Commons." But there is ſome-

thing like reaſon why no foreign Power will negociate with us, and that a much better reaſon than a dread of diſcloſing their ſecrets, in the right honourable gentleman's example. I declare, therefore, for the genius of our conſtitution, againſt the practice of his Majeſty's Miniſters: I declare that the duties of this Houſe are, vigilance in preference to ſecrecy, deliberation in preference to diſpatch. Sir, I have given my reaſons for ſupporting the motion for a vote of cenſure on the Miniſter. I will liſten to his defence with attention, and I will retract wherever he ſhall prove me to be wrong.

Mr. Chancellor PITT ſaid, the vehemence and violence which had been employed, and the ſplendid eloquence of the right honourable gentleman who had juſt ſat down, had called the attention of this Houſe to the ſubject now before it. His eloquence, for whatever purpoſe it was directed, was always powerful; and he was happy that his arguments on this debate had been brought forward,

forward, and that he had taken the opportunity, at a time when it was fully awake, to draw their attention to his ſentiments. He was alſo happy in the circumſtance of the adjourned debate, as it had allowed the Houſe to go more fully into the ſubject, and it was with peculiar ſatisfaction to him that, after having heard ſtated every thing that had been ſaid on a former evening, as well as on this, he now roſe with a very different temper, and a different view from that right honourable gentleman, to recall the attention of the Houſe from that brilliant diſplay of language, and that forcible appeal which had been made to their paſſions and imaginations, to what appeared to him to be the proper ſubject before them, and the real point in diſpute between them, and upon which their judgement ought to be exerciſed, and then he ſhould leave the whole to the deliberate wiſdom and impartial juſtice which he was confident that Houſe would exerciſe on this important ſubject, in which our national policy was involved, and on a point particularly affecting

affecting the character of the deliberative, as well as the executive part of Government.

In ſtating the grounds on which he ſhould have to call the attention of the Houſe, after it had heard the arguments of the right honourable gentleman, and alſo after having heard the debate of the preceding night, to which he had ſatisfaction in reverting, he ſhould endeavour to be as clear and as conciſe as poſſible; and notwithſtanding the eloquence with which they had juſt heard one ſide of the ſubject maintained, he ſtill referred with confidence to the principles developed in the debate of yeſterday, and in a ſpeech, which was ſtill in the recollection of this Houſe, and regarded as a ſpecimen of that clear eloquence, ſtrong ſenſe, juſtneſs of reaſoning, and extenſive knowledge, which he believed was wholly unexampled in any public aſſembly on a firſt eſſay, and would do honour to the moſt practiſed ſpeaker or ſtateſman that

ever

ever delivered his ſentiments within the walls of this Houſe.

In ſtating whatever occurred to him on this ſubject, and the grounds he ſhould lay before the Houſe, he begged to ſay, that he did not feel it neceſſary to enter into the grounds of ſome of the reaſoning which the Houſe had heard in the courſe of this debate; becauſe the general queſtion of ſyſtem is one part neceſſarily connected with the merits of the exerciſe of that ſyſtem, and becauſe it is impoſſible to ſeparate the conduct of Miniſters from the principle on which they acted, before the armament which forms the matter of diſpute was entered into, and having done ſo, then he ſhould proceed to ſtate the grounds on which this ſubject was taken up on that ſyſtem.—That part, therefore, which goes to ſeparate thoſe two points is unneceſſary, and being no material part of the debate, he ſhould therefore diſmiſs all conſideration of that ſort of reaſoning, as the paying attention to that diſtinction would only create confuſion

confuſion in conſidering the real points before the Houſe. He ſhould therefore take the liberty of confining the ſubject to its real limits, as they appeared to him; in the courſe of which he ſhould lay it down as an argument, that the meaſure in queſtion was founded on policy, and that ſucceſs was not unreaſonably to be expected in the iſſue.

The way in which the queſtion was to be debated, appeared to him to be firſt, by deſiring the Houſe to recollect the principle of the meaſure, or the foundation of our continental connection; and then the policy, under all the circumſtances of this caſe. Theſe points will be governed by the relative ſituation of this country with regard to its alliances with foreign powers; by a conſideration of the danger and inconvenience to which we might have been expoſed by an extenſion of the maritime power of Ruſſia. The wiſdom or folly of the whole ſyſtem will, in a great meaſure, depend on what is called the balance of power in Europe.

Many gentlemen ſeemed to think that the queſtion of the balance of power has been improperly introduced into this ſubject, and that it had nothing to do with the diſcuſſion of this caſe, but was totally inapplicable. Theſe points, indeed, are not ſtrenuouſly maintained, and therefore need not be dwelt upon; but he noticed them, not for any particular application they have to the ſubject, but for the ſake of the principle which the refutation of thoſe ſentiments tends to ſupport. The foundation of the matter, which he ſhould urge to the Houſe, reſts on this: The general balance of power, as applicable in this caſe to the arguments on the whole of the ſubject, has by ſome been the object of argumentative attack, and decried, and by others treated with affected ridicule; but on the regular diſcuſſion of this, much, in his opinion, depended. He had heard it allowed that the balance of power was a queſtion in which both ſides of the Houſe agreed in principle. Gentlemen on the other ſide admit the neceſſity of maintaining this balance, and ſay,

that we differ only in degree; and yet the length to which they carry their arguments againſt our interference will, notwithſtanding this admiſſion, defeat the very principle which they affect to ſupport; and thus the ſyſtem which they pretend to favour cannot regularly be applied at all.

When gentlemen admit that there is ſuch a thing as the balance of power, what is it but ſaying, that if we are ourſelves, or if our ally is, in a ſituation of danger from the overgrowth of another power, we ſhould, from due regard to the tranquillity of Europe, uſe our endeavours to check the growth of that power; and indeed we may be engaged ourſelves immediately in the calamity of a war by neglecting this principle, when applied to one ally only. He did not mean immediately in the ſenſe of time; but that we ourſelves might become the objects of attack, in conſequence of inattention to the principle of the balance of power. Whether this was material to Great Britain, or to any of her

allies, at the time of the armament, was another queſtion which he ſhould not endeavour to argue here; that would come much better in another ſtage of the argument. The point which he had here to contend was, that the principle of the balance of power was ſuch as we ought to regard with vigilance and attention, becauſe we are ſo deeply intereſted in its conſequences.—And what he objected to on the part of gentlemen, who argue on the other ſide was, that what they admit in terms on this ſubject, they deny in ſubſtance, and he believed that no one nation in Europe would, for a moment, be ſecure in its tranquillity, if the ſpirit of theſe doctrines was to be the governing principle of its Council. He was perſuaded, that notwithſtanding all we had heard to the contrary, that the balance of power is a thing on which depends much of the happineſs of the world, becauſe, though in ſome particular inſtances it led nations to war, it contributed, on the whole, to promote the general tranquillity, and to render wars of ambition leſs frequent and leſs de-

ſtructive. This principle being admitted, and it cannot reaſonably be denied, the firſt queſtion then will be, whether the ſituation of the Turkiſh empire was ſuch as to be affected in any great degree by the projects of the Imperial Court; and if ſo, whether this would, in fact, or probably might, have any effect on the balance of power in Europe? Whether that kingdom was indebted to this for any, and what degree of intervention, in its favour? Whether that intervention was rightly employed? Whether it was carried as far as, under all the circumſtances, was prudent and wiſe, and no farther? Theſe are the queſtions on which the whole of this debate will turn, and on which he was of opinion the juſtice of the Houſe would decide.'

He had heard it very much contended in this debate, which made it neceſſary for him to trouble the Houſe ſo much upon the ſubject, that the balance of power, as applied to the Turkiſh empire, was a wild and chimerical idea. Indeed, it was contended laſt year

ſpecifically, that the whole of the queſtion of the balance of power was irrelevant. Gentlemen do not chuſe to go to that length in the courſe of the preſent diſcuſſion; and yet the right honourable gentleman who ſpoke laſt, went, if he was not miſtaken with reſpect to what he had ſaid, very nearly to that extreme. He went very near to the point of contending, that if the Turkiſh empire were deſtroyed, it would have no effect on the balance of power in Europe, and would be a matter of total indifference in that reſpect to the other powers of Europe. He believed, however, that if this was his opinion, he would find himſelf ſingular in that idea.

He ſhould not, for the purpoſes of his defence, enter much at length into the nature of the empire of Turkey, but it was material to the Houſe, for the proper underſtanding of the ſubject in diſpute, to reflect for a while on the ſyſtem of our alliance. They would remember, that we had formed an alliance with the Court of Pruſſia, and that it was

due

due to the intereſt of that power that England, as its ally, ſhould not neglect to notice and to check the ſudden growth of a maritime power, which might, and probably will, be an inconvenient neighbour to that power. It was of importance to England itſelf, as a maritime power, independent of all alliance with any other; and as to the neceſſity there is of regarding the Porte as a power to be the object of attention to Europe, he believed that it would be found, that from the earlieſt periods of the Turkiſh empire, down to the preſent, it had been held eſſential to the balance of power, that no other ſhould be ſuffered to have too great a maritime aſcendancy over this power. France, ever ſince the reign of Francis I. had been conſidered as forming a very material part of the balance of power of Europe. In this country, ſince the reign of King William, in every memorable æra, down to the preſent period, it had been regarded in the ſame light. The principal Powers of Europe had entertained the ſame opinion of it. Its importance to the balance

of Europe is held out by the beſt authors who have written upon the ſubject: it is remarked by Monteſquieu; nor has it been ever denied by any author of any authority whatever. If this be true in general, how much more ſo muſt it be of the Turkiſh empire, when conſidered as threatened by the aſcendancy of ſo great a maritime power as that of Ruſſia. Indeed Ruſſia of itſelf, to any power, if ſuffered to increaſe its naval ſtrength, will be very formidable, and deſtroy that balance on which we all allow ſo much depends. Was it not wiſe, then, for this country to interfere for the purpoſe of checking the growth of this formidable power? The time might come when we ſhould not have that in our power, and although, for the happineſs of mankind, Providence ſeemed to have ordained that empires, when they became of an unwieldy ſize, worked their own deſtruction, yet it was wiſe in us to do all we could to prevent the exceſſive growth. And here he believed it would be granted it him, that the progreſs of Ruſſia was great and rapid, and the cha-

racter

racter of the Empreſs, whatever virtues ſhe may poſſeſs, not entirely free from ambition.

Of the truth of this we had ſome recent ſpecimens, and the Houſe would, he hoped, ſee, that if no interference had taken place on our part between thoſe contending parties, that the advantages which the Empreſs would have gained over the Turkiſh empire, would have given her the entire command of the Black Sea. He affirmed then, that not only as an ally of Pruſſia, but alſo on the general principle of ſelf-preſervation, our interference was dictated.

Having ſtated diſtinctly his opinion on the principle of the balance of power, that it applied to Turkey as well as to any other power, and that the intereſt of this maritime country, which muſt be affected by the aggrandizement of Ruſſia, even independent of of any alliance, in conſequence of our alliance with the Court of Berlin, became ſtill more

imme-

immediately connected, and that theſe conſiderations cannot be ſeparated, the queſtion then is, Whether there was a ſerious and reaſonable apprehenſion of danger towards us or our ally, ſo as to render our interference, and to render a prevention of the farther aggrandiſement, a rational policy on the part of this country; and whether Miniſters are to be accuſed of having gone ſo far in the riſks they entered into, for what appeared to them at leaſt to be for the future advantage of this country?

Our conduct, in the firſt inſtance, was certainly not cenſurable; for as to our commencement of the interference, it was at the requeſt of her Imperial Majeſty. She deſired that we, in conjunction with our ally the Court of Berlin, would repreſent to the Porte the moderation of her demands. Theſe demands were, that Beſſarabia, Moldavia, and Wallachia, ſhould be ceded to her, and this requiſition her Imperial Majeſty was pleaſed to term a ſpecimen of her moderation.——

Now he wiſhed the Houſe to reflect what would have been the conſequence, and whether it would not have been to the diſadvantage of the Turkiſh empire? and he thought this point ſo clear, that he might leave it to the Houſe, without farther comment.

He agreed with the right honourable gentleman who ſpoke laſt, that the laſt actual attack was unqueſtionably commenced on the Empreſs by the Turks, and that the claims of the Turks, taken by themſelves, were unjuſt, and not included in any treaty; but then the point of offenſive or defenſive war was not the queſtion to be conſidered by thoſe who were to interfere for the ſake of preſerving the balance of power, nor is the actual commencement of hoſtility the real aggreſſion between ſtates; theſe points are often governed by a conſideration of the ſyſtem adopted by either party. There was a regular ſyſtem on the part of Ruſſia for an encroachment on the Turks. This, he believed, was the origin of the diſpute between the

the parties, and if ſo, it is not very material, even on the point of juſtice, much leſs on the ſyſtem of the balance of power, who ſtruck the firſt blow; and that, but for our interference, the final accompliſhment of the views of the Empreſs would have followed, is a point which he believed would not be denied. If it cannot be denied, the intervention of this country has in this caſe been ſucceſsful; if our repreſentations have been ſuch as to induce Ruſſia to deſiſt from part of her project, how can it be ſaid we have gained nothing? Was the compelling the Empreſs to give up Moldavia, Wallachia, and Beſſarabia nothing? Theſe ſhe originally ſtipulated ſhould be ceded to her inſtead of Oczakow; and becauſe the other object was not obtained, are the Miniſters to be cenſured? We armed for the obtaining what appeared to us neceſſary; but all our object was not obtained, and for this he ſhould ſtate reaſons hereafter.

Gentlemen, when they argue upon the value of Oczakow, ſeem to me to be wide of

the real point to be conſidered. The truth is, that it is not of any great value as to its population or its commerce, but it is relatively ſo as a fortreſs which commands the Dneiſter; and ſo formidable is it to ſhips navigating this river, that they muſt paſs within the reach of the guns of the fortreſs. He did not ſtate this place to be of great value, but he ſtated it to be important as a point to be gained by the Empreſs on her ſyſtem of ambition. If he was right in the principle, namely, that it was a point worth contending for, it follows of courſe, that it was our duty to reſiſt the ſcheme of ambition of this Imperial Princeſs; and where there is a probability of ſucceſs, he would aſk any man in this country, whether the object intended to be gained was not worth the riſk? He would aſk any man if he was put into our ſituation, to determine for himſelf, whether he would not ſuffer the inconvenience, or the hazard of the miſcarriage of the project, for the ſake of what he had reaſon to hope he would gain?

The object that was to be attained by the arming, though not worth all—was worth ſome riſks. The conteſt between them was only with regard to the application of the principle; feeling as he did feel, the juſtice of this balance of power, to undergo a ſmall inconvenience in order to avoid a greater, this principle had been admitted and recognized in many of the moſt brilliant periods of the hiſtory of this country. It was a principle which had been conſtantly acted upon from the time this country began to hold any rank amidſt the ſurrounding nations of Europe.

It was the duty of the King's Miniſters to compare the changes that had happened with this principle, to compare the means with the end, the difficulty of the object with the proſpect of obtaining it, and its importance when obtained. He conceived he did his duty in adviſing the relinquiſhment of the object when he thought it could only be procured at too high a price. It had been ſaid by ſome people, that the ſenſe of the nation

was

was againſt the meaſure, and that therefore the King's Miniſters had abandoned their plan; others had alledged, that they had abandoned their original idea on account of the oppoſition of that Houſe, that is, of 135 gentlemen. Neither the one nor the other of theſe was true. It was a meaſure of a certain degree of importance, and was worth the going to a certain ſpecific length, but was not worth the going farther. It had been aſſerted, that after we had engaged in the war, they ought not to have changed their opinion, although that was a circumſtance that took place almoſt in the hiſtory of every war. It might happen, that you would be diſappointed in certain objects, and you would not then ſacrifice more than the object was worth. But how were the circumſtances altered?—ſome were alarmed at the expences, which created great apprehenſions in the country. He did not find fault with any opinion that had been delivered from real conviction. By theſe, and a number of ſimilar circumſtances, the difficulties of this war were increaſed, and

therefore

therefore they took into their moſt ſerious conſideration the difficulty of obtaining their object, and compared it with the real value of it when obtained. But had it not been for that oppoſition, that which was by that means unattainable, in his judgement, might have been obtained at no greater expence. He ſhould ſay, that the oppoſition, inſtead of claiming to themſelves the merit of preventing this country from being plunged into a war, had prevented the eſtabliſhment of peace in ſo ſolid and ſo ſubſtantial a manner as might otherwiſe have taken place in the country.

As to the cauſe of the Empreſs having refuſed to comply with our terms, he believed that the reſiſtance of her Imperial Majeſty to the requiſitions of our Court was owing in part to the arguments uſed by oppoſition in this country. He did not mean to call in queſtion the propriety of any Member of Parliament delivering his opinion, although the effect might afterwards turn out

to be againſt the intereſt of his country, if he ſhould, at the time of delivering his ſentiments, be of opinion that a greater inconvenience would ariſe to the State from his concealing than from his ſtating his opinion. He did not mean to blame this, even altho' it might be apparent, that the effect of delivering ſuch an opinion would be attended with a certain degree of inconvenience to the country, by embarraſſing Government.

Such opinions were delivered on this ſubject, and he was of opinion, that they had contributed to increaſe the diſpoſition of the Empreſs to a reſiſtance to our requiſitions: but he did not charge oppoſition with any principle hoſtile to the State. He was bound to admit the purity of their motives, unleſs he could prove the contrary; and other evidence than their own profeſſions he could not have. But whatever might be their opinions, he muſt ſay, that as far as they had any tendency, they did tend to induce the Empreſs to refuſe to comply with the requiſitions

ſitions of this country. It cannot be diſputed but they did tend to diminiſh the effect of our intervention; and but for theſe opinions, he firmly believed that our negociation would have been ſucceſsful. This is mere matter of opinion; but he could not help ſaying, that ſuch was the ſituation of Ruſſia, and ſuch the ſituation of this country, that with a ſmall additional expence we ſhould have had it in our power, for we had the means, of inducing her Imperial Majeſty to comply with our terms. That this was certain he did not affirm; but he affirmed, there was ground for this country to expect it. He aſſerted that the diviſion in this country encouraged the temper of reſiſtance in Ruſſia, and, if to ſave expence was right, we ſhould have done ſo, but unfortunately the enemy of our country was encouraged by an oppoſition, who now take merit to themſelves for rendering that uſeleſs which, but for their effort, would have been attended with ſucceſs, and that in his opinion without much expence; and they now

triumph in what they have done. But he did not envy them their triumph; it was not a triumph over the enemies of their country, but over the Council of the King. And now, as he was on the ſubject of triumph and of popularity, he muſt obſerve, that if he and his right honourable friend (Mr. Dundas) were to go to the capital of the empire, whom oppoſition have thus ſerved, certain he was, that they ſhould not be found in any place of glory between two orators (alluding to the buſt of Mr. Fox placed by the Empreſs between thoſe of Demoſthenes and Cicero) and that he did not believe that if he were to go to the capital of the empire, whoſe intereſt we have been endeavouring to protect, that he ſhould receive the ſame ſort of addreſs from the Grand Vizier as that which was read yeſterday, by an honourable Member of this Houſe. Indeed he did not know what to think of that compoſition. Of its authenticity he could ſay nothing. The honourable gentleman told nothing of it, but that

which

which he was pleaſed to read of it. Whether he read the whole of it—what was its date—from whom it came—to whom—and why, he could not poſſibly gueſs. All he could ſay was, that having inquired of the perſons moſt likely to be able to inform him, he had not been able to find out any ſuch paper, or any thing at all like it.

The honourable gentlemen on the oppoſite ſide have laid much ſtreſs upon a queſtion which they have very frequently put to Miniſters during this diſcuſſion; Why did we not diſarm the moment that we knew the terms upon which Ruſſia would conclude a peace with the Porte? and they have all along argued, that the only reaſon which he and his colleagues have given for that conduct is, that we were afraid that Ruſſia might increaſe her demands, or make new claims if we had diſarmed. That this was the only ground of their conduct he completely denied, becauſe he conceived, that no perſon, acquainted in any degree with the actual

ſituation of Europe at the time, could be ignorant, that there were other reaſons that ought to claim attention, and which, to have overlooked, would have been a failure of duty, and a total diſregard to the intereſts of the country. The next point that he muſt notice, was the management of this negociation, which has been ſo much miſrepreſented by the other ſide of the Houſe, and which, he was of opinion, could be fully juſtified, and will be ſo, in the opinion of the Houſe, on the reſult. He ſhould, therefore, not follow the right honourable gentleman into a detail of particulars during its progreſs, becauſe he conceived it to be perfectly unneceſſary; and if the conduct of Miniſters has produced ſuch advantages, or greater than the country expected from the negociation, he left it to the Houſe and the country to determine, what degree of cenſure was due to them. On the point of cenſure, the right honourable gentleman and his friends ſeem to have made up their minds ſo completely, that he has declared, whether our

reaſons for arming were right or wrong, we are equally wrong and equally deſerving of cenſure. This he conſidered as a ſpecies of argument which, however ingeniouſly put, can have little weight; for that Miniſters, whether they are right or wrong in their object for arming, ought to be cenſured, is a doctrine that even the moſt unſucceſsful reſult of a negociation could not juſtify. There next occurred to his recollection a part of the right honourable gentleman's ſpeech, which he was ſorry was not omitted, but which he could not allow to paſs without a reply. He meant his alluſion to the gentleman who was ſent as a Miniſter to Ruſſia—a perſon in whom Miniſters had every reaſon to confide, and who juſtly merited the compliments which the right honourable gentleman beſtowed upon him; but the alluſion made to another perſon, or rather the attack made upon him in his abſence, was highly improper, and, in his opinion, very unlike the uſual liberality of the right hononourable gentleman; and he would ſay in the preſence

ſence of this Houſe, and to the Public, that there is no man whatever who has been in the diplomatic line, to whom this country owes more than to the honourable perſon alluded to; the ſervices he has performed the country can be no ſtranger to, and the exerciſe of his abilities will always be of importance when called into action.—With regard to the importance of Oczakow, the right honourable gentleman ſeems to have barred that queſtion being brought to iſſue, becauſe, as he had remarked juſt now, he has ſaid, that whether it was, or was not, of importance to the balance of power in Europe, it could, in no ſhape whatever, be a ground for our interference between Ruſſia and the Ottoman Porte; and by this manner of arguing he did maintain, that the whole jet of all the arguments of the right honourable gentleman and his friends, both on this, and the former nights of diſcuſſion, comes to this, that he will, upon the queſtion of the Ruſſian armament, admit any premiſes, provided the concluſions tend to

cen-

cenſure Miniſters, although the very firſt of the reſolutions brought forward, ſtates directly, that Oczakow was not of ſufficient importance to require our interference; to eſtabliſh this, great pains have been taken to impreſs upon the Houſe a belief that we have been guilty of the groſſeſt iniquity, and moſt unwarrantable treachery towards our allies. That we had ſtimulated Turkey to the war in which ſhe had been engaged, a fact which he diſclaimed, and which could not be made good. That we had deſerted Sweden at a critical juncture, which likewiſe he would not allow; and that by our interference and mediation nothing had been gained or ſecured to Pruſſia. That our intervention in the affairs of Brabant was improper; and that wherever we had employed our influence, or wiſhed to favour an ally, we had met with diſgrace, and our allies with diſappointment. Upon this ſubject he was perfectly at eaſe, nor did he conceive that there were any juſt grounds to reproach Miniſters upon. As to the duplicity in their negociations, which

has

has been aſcribed to the ſyſtem of continental alliance, he did not believe the Houſe had gone with the right honourable gentleman on that point. He muſt therefore ſay, that with regard to the moderation of the firſt terms offered by the Empreſs, and the propriety of acceding to thoſe we finally got, that matter being ſo fully in poſſeſſion of the Houſe, he left it to their judgement. As to their motives, he could likewiſe rely, that theſe ſhould be judged by their actions, whatever were their reaſons, both on this and every other occaſion, where the intereſt of the country was concerned; and he owned that his chief hopes were reſted upon the advantages that had been gained by the ſyſtem both of foreign and domeſtic policy, which his Majeſty's Miniſters have purſued, and the actual proſperity of the country, to whatever cauſes gentlemen may aſcribe it. He wiſhed for no diſcretionary power, that was not neceſſary for the functions of the ſituation in which he might be placed, and he knew, as well as any body, that the conduct of the preſent

time, good or bad, muſt affect poſterity. Having ſtated the leading grounds for his oppoſition to the reſolutions moved, he muſt contend, that if any obloquy attended the meaſures of Government in the Ruſſian negociation, it proceeded from miſrepreſentation: from what motives that miſrepreſentation proceeded, he did not mean to give any opinion; and ſhould content himſelf with relying upon a liberal and juſt deciſion of the Houſe, after they have fairly and fully conſidered every circumſtance that can enable them to decide upon his conduct, and thoſe who acted with him.

Mr. FOX. I do aſſure the Houſe that I mean to confine myſelf ſtrictly to explanation, having heard nothing from the right honourable gentleman to make me retract the cenſure, which, in my opinion, his conduct demands. But I wiſh the Houſe to recollect, that when, at the beginning of the laſt ſeſſion, I aſked for what purpoſe a part of the armament provided againſt Spain was kept up?

up? I was told, that it aroſe from the ſituation of Europe, and was neceſſary for the protection of our homeward-bound Weſt-India merchantmen: but neither did I then underſtand, nor by any thing that fell from me, give gentlemen reaſon to think I underſtood, that force to be deſtined to act againſt Ruſſia. The right honourable gentleman's inſinuation, therefore, that I knew of, and approved the keeping up an armament to awe the Empreſs, is totally void of foundation.

With regard to what the right honourable gentleman has choſen to introduce into his ſpeech, reſpecting compliments and honours conferred on me by the Empreſs of Ruſſia, I am ready now, and at all times, to declare, that if any foreign Sovereign, in friendſhip with my country, ſhall pay me the compliment to think well of me, and teſtify it by thoſe marks of diſtinction to which he has alluded, I ſhall feel myſelf highly gratified by ſuch diſtinction. With regard to Ruſſia, it has ever been my opinion, that her's was

the power in Europe, I will ſcarcely except even Holland, with whom the cultivation of reciprocal ties of friendſhip, both commercial and political, was moſt natural, and of the greateſt conſequence to this country. For the uniformity of this opinion, Sir, I appeal to my whole conduct, whether in office or out of it. At the cloſe of the American war, I thought Ruſſia the Power whoſe naval force, joined with our's, might effectually counterbalance the united navies of the Houſe of Bourbon. The gentlemen on the other ſide have opportunities of knowing to what degree I endeavoured to give effect to this opinion. When I was again in office, I refuſed to concur in remonſtrances to the Court of Peterſburgh againſt the ſeizure of the Crimea.—I appeal farther to the ſentiments delivered by me in this Houſe, when I added my voice to thoſe of the right honourable gentleman's ſupporters, in applauding the ſucceſs of the meaſures taken to aſſiſt the Stadtholder in 1787; when, in avowing my approbation of what was done, I gave, as my

principal reaſon for that approbation, the option it placed in our power at that moment of forming alliances on the Continent, which might render the advantages we got by our interference permanent; and when I diſtinctly named Ruſſia as one of thoſe whom it was of the higheſt importance to cultivate. Theſe have ever been my ſentiments, and I have ſeen nothing in what has recently happened to make me change them. I thought it neceſſary to ſay thus much in anſwer to the hints and inſinuations thrown out from the right honourable gentleman oppoſite to me: as to any farther reply, I ſhould deem it wholly ſuperfluous, even were I permitted to make any, as the right honourable gentleman has choſen to avoid noticing almoſt every material argument I addreſſed to the Houſe.

BRITISH MUSEUM 5 DEC 83

CORRECT

CORRECT LIST of the MINORITY on Mr. WHITBREAD's Motions.

Honourable Cropley Aſhley
Thomas Anſon
John Anſtruther
William Adam

Lord Edward Bentick
The Earl of Burford
Rt. Hon. John Burgoyne
Sir Henry Bridgeman, Bart.
Hon. Edward Bouverie
James Buller
George Byng
Richard Beckford
Joſeph Randyll Burch
Richard Benyon
Hugh Barlow

Lord George Cavendiſh
Lord Geo. A. H. Cavendiſh
Lt. Gen. Sir H. Clinton, K.B.
Hon. John Summers Cocks
Hon. Wm. Seymour Conway
Sir James Erſkine St. Clare
John Barker Church
John Crewe
Thomas William Coke
Daniel Parker Coke
Thos. Champion Creſpigny
William Currie
John Cotes

Viſcount Downe
Hon. Lionel Damer
Sir Thos. Dundas, Bart.
Lawrence Dundas
James Dawkins
Rt. Hon. W. Ellis
Hon. Thomas Erſkine
Gerard Noel Edwards.

Rt. Hon. Charles James Fox
Rt. Hon. Col. Fitzpatrick
Sir Henry Fletcher, Bart.
Philip Francis

Hon. Thomas Grenville
Charles Grey
Francis Gregg

John Cox Hippiſley
David Howell
John Harriſon
Filmer Honeywood
James Hare
Henry Howard
William Huſſey
John Harcourt
Winchcombe Henry Hartley

Earl of Inchiquin, K. B.
Sir John Jervis, K. B.
Hon. St. Andrew St. John
R. Payne Knight

Earl Ludlow
Sir William Lemon, Bart.
Sir J. Fleming Leiceſter, Bt.
Edward Loveden Loveden
James Martin Lloyd
Samuel Long
Gerrard Lake

Wm.

Wm. Henry Lambton	Honourable James Stuart
William Laurence	General Richard Smith
Sir W. M. Milner, Bart.	Thomas Stanley
Sir Roger Moſtyn, Bart.	John Sawbridge
Hon. Thomas Maitland	Richard Brinſley Sheridan
Hon. Ed. Monckton	John Shaw Stuart
James Martin	Timothy Shelley
Ralph Milbanke	Major John Scott
James Macpherſon	Hans Sloane
Lord North	Charles Sturt
Dudley North	Marquis of Titchfield
John Neſbit	Sir John Thorold, Bart.
William Moſtyn Owen	Rt. Hon. Ch. Townſhend
Rt. Hon. Thomas Pelham	Banaſtre Tarleton
Viſcount Palmerſton	John Trevannion
Thomas Powys	Thomas Thomſon
Lawrence Palk	Earl of Upper Oſſory
John Willet Payne	Sir Joſhua Vanneck, Bt.
J. G. Philips	Robert Vyner
Lord William Ruſſel	Sir George Warren, K. B.
Sir Matthew W. Ridley, Bt.	Sir Ed. Winnington, Bt.
Hon. John Rawdon	Rt. Hon. Wil. Windham
Lord Sheffield	Hon. Horatio Walpole
Lord Robert Spencer	James Walwyn
Sir Geo. Aug. Wm. Shuckburgh, Bart.	Charles Callis Weſtern
	William Weddell
Sir John Sinclair, Bart.	Roger Wilbraham

Samuel Whitbread, } 116
M. A. Taylor, } Tellers 2

118

FINIS.

BRITISH MUSEUM 5 DEC 83